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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Second NYPD Officer Pleads Guilty to Perfume Warehouse Armed Robbery Scheme

(More)

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NEWARK, N.J.— A second New York City police officer pleaded guilty today to conspiring to commit the armed robbery of a Carlstadt perfume warehouse, in which he, fellow NYPD officers, and others stole approximately \$600,000 in perfume while holding 11 employees hostage, U.S. Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

Richard LeBlanca, 26, of New York, New York, pleaded guilty to the conspiracy charge before U.S. District Judge William H. Walls. LeBlanca was remanded pending his sentencing, which is scheduled for July 26, 2010.

On March 5, 2010, LeBlanca was arrested pursuant to a Complaint along with NYPD Officer Brian Checo of New York, New York; Gabriel Vargas of Brooklyn, New York; Luis R. Morales of Brooklyn, New York; Anselmo Jimenes, a/k/a “Ansemo Jimenes,” of Brooklyn, New York; Alan A. Bannout, of Brooklyn, New York; and former NYPD Officer Orlando Garcia, of New York, New York. According to the Complaint charging the aforementioned defendants, the defendants conspired to obstruct commerce by robbing hundreds of boxes of high-end perfumes and fragrances from a warehouse used by a company known as In Style USA, Inc. in Carlstadt, New Jersey.

NYPD Officer Kelvin L. Jones, of New York, New York, was charged in a separate Complaint on March 5, 2010 as part of a continuing investigation by federal authorities into the heist.

At his plea hearing, LeBlanca, who worked in the 34th Precinct, admitted that from December 2009 to February 2010, he conspired with fellow officers Jones, Checo and others to rob the In Style USA warehouse. LeBlanca stated that on February 9, 2010, he, Jones, Checo, Garcia, and others entered the warehouse office while brandishing firearms, displaying NYPD-issued badges, and announcing themselves as NYPD officers. LeBlanca admitted that, during the course of the robbery, 11 employees’ hands were restrained behind their backs and they were held hostage while the conspirators loaded hundreds of boxes of perfume onto trucks that were used to transport the stolen perfume. LeBlanca further stated that, after leaving the warehouse, he met Jones, Checo, Garcia, and others in New York, where they developed a plan to conceal the crime after some of the conspirators had been arrested at the robbery site by Carlstadt authorities. LeBlanca admitted that, in an effort to conceal his involvement, he falsely reported to his bank that his ATM debit card had been stolen, the same card he had used earlier that day to pay for rental of one of the two trucks used in the heist.

Checo pleaded guilty before Judge Walls on March 23, 2010, to conspiring to commit armed robbery. As for the other defendants, the charges against them are merely accusations and they are considered innocent unless and until proven guilty.

The charge to which LeBlanca pleaded guilty carries a maximum statutory penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

In determining an actual sentence, Judge Walls will consult the advisory United States Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendant’s criminal history, if any, and other

factors. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining the sentence. Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all that time.

Fishman credited Special Agents of the FBI, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Michael B. Ward in Newark, New Jersey, for conducting the investigation. Fishman also thanked the Bergen County Prosecutor's Office, under the direction of John L. Molinelli, as well as the Carlstadt Police Department and the NYPD Internal Affairs Bureau, for their assistance.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Christopher J. Gramiccioni and Eric T. Kanefsky of the Office's Special Prosecutions Division and Criminal Division, respectively.

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Defense Counsel: Edgar De Leon, Esq., New York, New York